2: Caroe 8-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

are introduced to banquets spread out in garden pavilions, where *Kolkhoz* officials uneasily may take their ease.[1]

The cultivated lands of the southern oases are in a favoured part of the earth's surface. They are indeed restricted, but acre for acre, they are probably among the most productive in Asia. Throughout history the population was thick on the land and, once subdued, could be subjected to police control village by village without being able to put up much of a resistance. State management of the essential water-supply gave to authority the final weapon that could scarcely be gainsaid. Even the second Revolution could not destroy the natural prosperity of such favoured lands as these. But on the steppe and in the mountains it was different.

THE NOMADS

In order to understand the situation facing the Soviet planners of the collective farm in the wide unirrigated territory north of the Sir Darya, and in the more remote mountain glens, it is necessary to have some insight into the meaning of Central Asian nomadism. There are two forms of nomadism: that of the spreading open steppe, and that of the nomads who move with the season to the mountains. The first form, that of the steppe, is not unlike the nomadism of the Beduin in the Arabian deserts, for much of the steppe melts into a desert colder and less hospitable than Arabia. It has indeed a considerable snow precipitation, and therefore usually affords excellent pasture when the snows melt in the spring. But

[1] Cf. Coates, *op. cit.* pp. 232-4. This contains an amusing account of a princely entertainment offered in 1947 in the garden surrounding his private house near Tashkent by the Uzbek chairman of a *Kolkhoz*. The meal was spread in a pavilion — one among many — looking down a garden avenue, flanked with vines laden with grapes. The first course consisted of pies, sausages, bread and cakes, fried pelmets, fruit, almonds, sweets, wine and cognac, with soup, tea and yoghurt as aids to digestion. There followed the *pièce de résistance*, a pilav, an hour's gorged rest and to finish up a rich dessert of melons, grapes and other fruit. 'What', asked the visitors, 'has become of the former owners of the land?' 'Some', replied the chairman, 'were killed during the fighting, others had fled the USSR, but some of the younger people have settled down to honest labour. The son of my former master, for instance, is now a member of this *Kolkhoz*.'

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

So far as the Communist authorities are concerned, the actual wedding act should consist merely of a registration in the local office of the ZAGS (*Zapis' aktov grazhdanskogo sostoianiia* — Registry of Civil Acts); any festivities connected with it should preferably be organized by the local Young Communist League, Trade Union, or other organization to which the young couple belongs. In fact, however, the natives prefer to celebrate weddings in a more traditional manner. Among the inhabitants of the steppe and desert, for instance, it is still customary on the wedding day for the bride (properly veiled) to wait at her parents' home for the friends of the bridegroom to take her to her new home — but whereas before the Revolution she was transported on a camel or a horse, she is now brought to the wedding place in a rented automobile. It is still customary, while the wedding party is in progress, for the young pair to retire to a separate room, and there have sexual relations, in order to be able to prove to the relatives of both parties the virginity of the bride. The entire wedding ceremony in Central Asia assumes ever more the character of a purely secular festivity, but insofar as possible it is carried out within the framework of traditional nonreligious forms and rituals.

The food habits of the natives seem to have undergone little change. Through contact with Russians they have been exposed to such novel foods as potatoes, bread, and boiled eggs, but their preference is for traditional native dishes: pilau, kumys, etc. They are often compelled to eat Russian food, including pork, in government and other restaurants and in the army, but they avoid it if at all possible. The natives seem to prefer to partake of their main meal in the evening, rather than at midday, as the Russians are in the habit of doing.

In clothing the natives of Central Asia appear to tend in the direction of a synthesis of traditional and Western garb. The basic articles of wear, their cut, and ornamentation are native; but some items of clothing are adopted from the Russians. Adult males have almost everywhere taken to wearing leather shoes, which are superior in comfort and durability to their native counterparts; Muslim girls like to wear, together with their national costumes, Western-style blouses. Soviet sources report a general tendency on the part of natives to wear mixed clothing, part Western, part native — the former apparently for comfort, the latter for national identification. In the cities, especially among the youth, Western clothing predominates; in the village, the opposite is the case. In clothes, as in other customs, the principle enunciated earlier holds true: the natives discard what is patently inconvenient and adopt from the Russians what is more practical, i.e., Western. They do not discard traditions for reasons other than utility.

age of adolescence; the local press even reports occasionally instances of high-school graduating classes being completely devoid of girls, all of them having dropped out a few years earlier. See *Central Asian Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1953), pp. 47–53; vol. 2, no. 1 (1954), pp. 71–72.